

Thesis

on

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In this attempt to set down a few thoughts, in regard to the relation of surgery to Homoeopathy, we would first glance briefly at the position which it has occupied in the past, & which it now occupies in relation to the practice of Medicine in general.

Formerly, especially in the old world, there was little or no connection between; But the surgeon was a sort of scientific butcher, who was neither required or expected to know much, if anything, of medicine. He was unrefined in his art, and to a great degree unscientific. His distinctions were by no means nice; But the surgeon, was to the physician, what the undertaker was to the surgeon; a very convenient scape-goat for his sins of ignorance and carelessness. When the man of physic failed with his blisters & purges - his leeches & lotions,

to deprive the unfortunate patient of life, the
surgeon, thirsting for blood, would usually
quickly succeed in consigning him to the
care of the undertaker who generously concealed
beneath the sod, the miserable journey work
of his allies. In the progress of events, however,
as the world advanced in science and the
arts, and humanity gradually rose to a
higher level, greater perfection in the healing
art was demanded, as well as in all others,
and as the result, surgery became wedded
to Medicine. It was to a great extent elevated
and purified by the alliance. No one has ever
pretended to doubt the propriety of this
marriage. It is now conceded by all medical
authorities that the professions of Medicine
and surgery should not be disunited;
But the physician should always be a surgeon,

and the surgeon should always be a physician.
Old school practitioners adopt, and act upon
this doctrine, and the lines of distinction, are
nearly if not quite obliterated, at least in this
country. It is true & always will be true that some
men, owing to peculiarity of taste and talent,
make one or the other branch a specialty.
But no intelligent and conscientious allopath
feels warranted in establishing himself as
a responsible physician, in any commun-
ity unless he is able creditably to perform
any surgical operation, which in general
practice the physician is called upon to do.
In the country these operations must be
performed by himself; But in the city, while
understanding when the interference of the
surgeon is necessary, and also what is
required to be done, he may, if he chooses

call for the assistance of his colleague who makes it a specialty. The medical treatment of both being the same, the patient loses nothing by the transfer. Of course we are now referring to allopathic physicians of respectability and good standing: many of them, we will know, are a disgrace to both surgery and practice, viewed even from an old school standpoint.

Since the era in the history of surgery, the beginning of which, was marked by its first alliance to medicine, it has been slowly but steadily rising on the scale of refinement and scientific perfection, till, at the present day, in comparison with what it was, it has come to be a noble and beneficent calling.

Then the surgeon's ambition was to perform the most daring and heroic feats of his art: and like the ambitious warrior he sighed

for new fields of slaughter, as the path to glory
& renown. But he has grown more & more
conservative, until now he, who would gain
the applause of the profession, strives to make
the knife most subservient to medicine.

Great progress has been made, but still the
goal is not reached. Still the plundering
empirics of the old school, are often seen
to use the knife to hide their ignorance of
the science of cure.

We have seen, by the foregoing
casual glance, what surgery was in the hands
of the medically uneducated man, and what
it now is in the hands of the allopathic
profession. Let us next consider to what
extent the knife may be dispensed with by
the medical world; doubtless to a far greater
than has yet been seen. The day is, we may

hope, not very far distant, when its sphere of
action will be vastly diminished; and he
who can cure disease of body or of limb, most
promptly & thoroughly by scientific medical
treatment, will be most in demand and
most honored by the profession & the people at
large. But, while the law of gravitation prevails,
and the busy, bustling, jostling world moves on,
and humanity breaks its arms and legs,
dislocates its joints, and is mangled
by the destructive missiles of war, just so long
will the knife and other surgical appliances
be required. Our noble healing art cannot
wholly dispense with the knife & the splint.
They are positively essential to the proper
conservation of human health and life.
In further considering this self evident
proposition, the question arises, to whose hands

do the interests of humanity & the honor of
the medical profession require that the knife
should be entrusted. We have seen what it
is in the hands of the empirics & now ask
what disposition shall be made of it for the
future. Shall we as Homoeopaths, who
claim to be, and are, true reformers in medicine,
take no interest in the reformation & purification
of this indispensable part of medical science?
While we so earnestly strive to save poor
diseased humanity from the poisonous
drugging, and merciless dredging of the
empirics, shall we with indifference leave
them to their, still far too pitiless knife?
In other words, have homoeopaths
a right, or can they afford to turn their
backs upon surgery? Is true homoeo-
pathic medicine so far more independent

of the Knife, than allopathies have chance of.
No, it is well known, cure very many diseases,
which they call local, & consign without
hesitation to the surgeon, by constitutional
treatment. We indeed claim that no disease
is local. The moment morbid symptoms manifest
themselves in any part of the body, we know
that there is morbid action at the seat of life,
and the Knife is unavailingly to effect a
radical cure. The tumor which they must extirpate
by the use of mechanical means, alone, we often
cause to disappear under the action of the
properly selected remedy. The abscess, into which
they are fair, at first sight, to plunge the bistoury,
we may many times relieve by the magical
action of the pullet. The inflamed and congested
eye, which they barbarously torture with their
cruel caustics, readily & kindly yields to a rational

homoeopathic treatment. While they are swabbing
and boring out the throat of their victims, the
true homoeopathician prevents, or speedily relieves
the diseased throat by the operation of the only
true law of cure. The poor female who is fainting
with loss of blood, which pours from the
uncontracted uterus, is drugged at one end, and
plugged at the other. If the patient's nerves
are diseased, they burn furrows in the region
of the spinal column, with the white hot iron.
Local inflammation is combatted by them, with
blisters, leeches, setons, caustics, or the horrible
actual cautery. A treatment barbarous
enough, one would think, to cause a
man of any refinement of feeling to leave
his profession in disgust. In these and
numerous other diseases the true homoeopathician
discards the knife & all their coarse and brutal.

appliances and relies with confidence upon the
despised and insignificant pullet. And yet
there is a manifest limit to the power of this
wonderful globe. It cannot dress a fractured
arm, or properly adjust a broken thigh, and
give to the patient, unaided by surgery a sound
and symmetrical limb. It will never answer
instead of splints and bandages. It cannot
search out and extract the deeply buried rifle
ball. Dislocations are not reduced by internal
medicinal treatment. In these, and many other
cases, it of course is of no avail, save as a valuable
adjutant to proper surgical appliances.

It would hardly seem necessary to repeat such
self evident facts, were it not true that some
homoeopaths seem to be so absorbed in the
study of medicinal action, and place such
unlimited reliance upon it, as to become

apparently oblivious to the plainest teachings of common sense, and thus bring our truly noble science in to dispute among the people, who are ever inclined to take a practical view of our profession as of all other things. If we violently claim too much for our remedies, they will be very apt to concede nothing to them.

It may be said, we should ever follow the truth and practice our art according to true principles, regardless of the estimation in which we may be held; having higher and nobler motives of action than merely a desire for popularity. Far be it from us to deny this position, or to attempt to detract from it in the least degree. But while we are bound to adhere unflinchingly to the truth, regardless of fame, are we not under equal obligation, to preserve that truth from being needlessly cast into contempt? This

We are guilty of doing; however, whenever we attempt to make the practice of our science violate the plainest teachings of the rational understanding. To illustrate our meaning, a single example may be cited; viz: a homoeopathic physician is called to attend a lady, suffering from great pain swelling and lameness in the vicinity of the ankle joint. He sits down, and drawing forth his ever ready paper and pencil, notes carefully each symptom of the case from top to toe, and prescribes the indicated remedy. He does not diagnose the case; according to his understanding of the teachings of Hahnemann, he has nothing to do with pathology. Given the symptoms of the disease on the one hand, and the representative remedy on the other, and the patient must recover, he argues. But in this case the patient does not recover.

The limb remains deformed and useless, and after many weeks of suffering, the lady sends for an old school doctor, who, "understands his business," and he at once diagnoses a dislocated ankle joint & reduces it.

This is not a fancy sketch, and such disgraceful incidents are constantly happening in the practice of homoeopaths.

How often does the homoeopathic obstetrician, as soon as he finds himself in charge of a case of labor requiring instrumental interference, forthwith send for his allopathic colleague, who applies the forceps with a will, and the dear people are convinced, that it takes an allopathic doctor to help them out, when any thing serious is the matter. The fact that so eminent an obstetrician as our beloved and honored professor of that chair, was

anxiously inquired of by an intelligent family
who had previously had allopathic attendance,
as to what should be done, if the lady under
his medical care, should require the
introduction of the catheter; supposing that he
could not be expected to be acquainted with
the manipulation of that important instrument.
Simply because he was a homoeopath, is a
marked attestation of the low estimation
in which the surgical skill of physicians of
our school is held. This would not be so, had
homoeopaths shown themselves equal in surgical
skill to physicians of the empirical school,
as they ought to have done. As before remarked,
we would not deviate from the path of duty, for
the sake of popularity, but we act, according
to the dictates of our judgment and conscience,
for the best interest of the patient, regardless

of the ungrateful returns and want of appreciation
we may receive at their hands; and yet we should
perhaps error the people right, if we were
occasionally to do a little unnecessary
hacking, just to show them we know how it
is done. But still we should remember the people
are not to blame. If a large proportion of our
practitioners shun surgery wholly, or show
themselves inadequate to it, we must not find
fault if we are judged accordingly, even though,
in consequence of our deficiency in this
department, they withhold our judgment
in other branches of our profession.

We cannot afford, neither have we a right to
ignore this indispensable science. We are the
conservators of the only true practice of
medicine; and should also be of its
wedded comort surgery. We have no right

to attempt their divorce; they belong together
under all systems of medicine, and much
more under ours. This would seem to be an
unnecessary assertion; as the very existence
of the chair of surgery in our colleges, would
seem to be prima facie evidence that it
is considered by our school as an indispensable
ally of medicine. Nevertheless the fact remains
that Homoeopaths are notoriously unskilled
in surgery; and the principal reason is
found in the light estimation in which
it is held by them. Our professors of other
chairs lose no opportunity to sneer at the
use of the knife. "The pellet, the pellet they cry
is omnipotent." Surgery is our shame, and
the knife a disgrace to him who uses it."
A manifest falsity, and contradiction of
self evident facts. It is not surgery but the

abuse of surgery that disgraces the profession. This distinction is not made sufficiently clear, by our teachers, and the students of our colleges to a great degree, imbibe a disgust for surgery and many of them enter practice with the determination to have as little as possible to do with it. They follow the teachings of its professor, simply that they may be able to pass a creditable examination before him in the green room. This is not as it should be. Instead of standing aloof from surgery, leaving it in the hands of those who not only abuse it, but also abuse us by means of it, & bring us into contempt in the eyes of the world, thereby greatly curtailing our influence and the spread of homoeopathy, we should come boldly forward and grasp the knife; and while we teach them how to

dispute with its use when not needed,
also show them how gracefully and
scientifically to use it when resort to it is
required. Let no Homoeopathician, be guilty
of having forced upon him the necessity of
calling upon his empirical colleagues to
do his instrumental work. If we must
have surgeons, and the necessity will not
be denied, let them be men who understand
just where to draw the line between medicine
& the knife; and he alone can properly define
that point who is capable of exhausting the
curative power of medicine in its truly
scientific application. It may be true that
in many cases the allopathic doctor can be
allowed to consult his taste, and choose
whether to make one or other branch of the
profession a speciality; but it can hardly

in any case, be permissible for the Homoeopath to do, because he so uniformly stands alone in the community where he practices, and must either do his own surgery or leave it to the empirics. And yet the latter alternative, is almost universally adopted even in our large cities. In the name of common sense and economy, if Homoeopaths cannot do their own surgery, let the force of teaching it in our colleges be discontinued, and the whole attention of students be devoted to those branches of our art which they are expected to practice. We should be jealous for the honor of Homoeopathy, and stand by ourselves, - dependent upon no one to do for us, any duty which ever devolves upon the physician to perform, under the broadest definition of his sphere of action. If we are content to submit, this,

Which truly, is not the most agreeable part of
our duty, the people will not force it upon us,
but contemptuously turn to the "scientific
men of the old school," leaving us, as they
facetiously remark, "to doctor the babies &
ladies who play sick." Let it be the purpose
of each homoeopathician to disabuse the
minds of the community of this, which
ought to be erroneous idea, and teach them
by example that we are in nothing inferior
to, or dependant upon the empirics; but
are able in all things pertaining to our
profession, to maintain an honorable position.

Never forgetting that the art of healing by
the beautiful law, bequeathed to us by the
great founder of homoeopathy, is the noblest
part of our calling; ever striving for a pure
and more comprehensive knowledge of

medicine, that we may thus make ourselves
truly benefactors of our kind.

Then we shall
not only conquer and banish disease
of the body, but do much to elevate and
nobilitate the race. Disease is the fruit of the
curse which sin has entailed upon
humanity; and may we not therefore by
an inverse process, by healing the diseases
of the body do much to cure the
degradation of the soul.